



PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION (WATU)

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WATU newsletter April 2011.

Dear Friends of WATU,

Welcome to Issue 5 of the WATU Newsletter. Since we last reported in November of 2010 a great deal has happened at Shiri Mgungani and with our group of sponsored students.

The Shiri Mgungani Learning Centre and Senior Secondary School.

The main building at Shiri has been modified so that it now accommodates a library, staffroom, reception area and headteacher's office as well as a large classroom. This



modification is in preparation for the senior secondary school. New toilet blocks and sewerage systems have been installed and the new (computer) classroom is finished with its ceiling boards. Important modifications have also been made to the hostel. Much of this work has been possible because of very generous donations from the Procter and Gamble Alumni Network Philanthropy Program (America), Tetral SA of Lutry Switzerland, and also from Vandana and Ravi Uppal whose particular contribution has enabled the

installation of the interior fittings of the science block. However, some further work is necessary and funds are urgently needed if we are to start the school on time which is now set for May 15th. Electricity to the site is still a major drawback and might also delay our opening the senior secondary school. We are completely dependent on TANESCO bringing the electricity to the village. We do have a generator for emergency needs but this is not sufficient for the daily running of the school. Without these extra funds and the electricity we may have to postpone until the beginning of 2012. More on this in the July newsletter.

The Kindergarten



One consequence of modifying the main building at Shiri is that when the small senior secondary school opens the kindergarten classroom will need to be used for the older students. Tanzanian school regulations state that senior students and primary school children may not share school buildings and facilities. Thus, we need to build one more classroom for the little ones with its own access to their toilet block.

The Sponsored Students

Richard was able to meet a number of the sponsored students who had recently completed their Form Four “O” Level examinations. Results throughout the country had been described as “disastrous”, the consequence of a number of inadequacies in the public education system, (indeed, the very inadequacies we aim to circumvent with our small senior secondary school and our early learning kindergarten classes). Many of our students were disappointed. Nonetheless, we were able to help them form plans for the future, some to resit their Form Four exams others to go into vocational work or other employment training such as tour guides, hotel management or nursery school teaching. We are waiting for two Form Six “A” Level results, and our recent graduates are making their way in university, although even there, government funds are not always as forthcoming as they could be. As always, WATU must thank FOTIS of Geneva, the Friends of the Munich International School, and The Righ Foundation for their continued and invaluable support to these young people.

WATU’s New Vehicle

The Volkswagen Sharan 4WD, which was very kindly donated by Henrik and Linda Svennas, and packed with educational materials, has arrived in Moshi!but not without considerable difficulties. Josiah spent days, even weeks, in Dar es Salaam arranging for the release of the vehicle which eventually happened in the middle of March. Never could we have imagined the frustrations Josiah encountered, especially as back in February 2010 our large container of educational materials had passed through customs without a hitch! However, we are very grateful to the TRA (the Tanzanian tax authorities) who did all they could to expedite the process, and particularly grateful to Mr Ashraf Khan, the General Manager of Azam ICD (the company who owns the storage depot where the container was kept for many weeks) together with his Executive Director, Mr Abubakari Bakresa, and Operations Manager, Mr Raymond Louis, who waived the entirety of the demurrage charges, some 5000 dollars. The Mediterranean Shipping Company also reduced their storage charges by well over 50% for which we are also very grateful. A final thanks must go to Henrik and Linda who have covered these costs, including the substantial import tax.



Local Support.

Still on the subject of local Tanzanian support for our work, we are very pleased indeed to be able to announce the grant of 300,000 Tanzanian shillings from the Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Mrs Monica Mbega. Working in conjunction with the local education authority is central to WATU’s policy and it is gratifying to see our work being acknowledged and appreciated. Local Tanzanian support from individuals is also beginning to take off. We are grateful to Dani and Mina Kawa, to Mr Hezrom Lema and to Mr and Mrs Msama, for their generous financial support.

The film.



Our thanks are due also to Mr Pontus Wallsten, who was able to present his film on WATU's work and the educational climate in Tanzania, "Pamoja Tunaweza", at a special première at the house of Linda and Henrik Svennas last month. Pontus financed the film entirely himself and has given an enormous amount of time to this project. The film was very well-received, and further showings are planned for the near future. Richard was able to present the film in March to a small group of our sponsored students in Moshi. They

were thrilled to see themselves on camera. We have made copies for local publicity in Moshi.

Personnel

We are pleased to announce that Mr Mark Mwrabu has agreed to act as teaching principle for the senior secondary school. We have known Mr Mwrabu for many years and he is an experienced school principle. His work and advice will be invaluable.

We are sorry to announce that Mr Odran Tarimo (seated in the picture above) who has worked tirelessly for WATU from the beginning, and most of the time for hardly any remuneration, has joined his family's business. However, his heart is still very much with WATU and he has very generously agreed to work one day a week on a voluntary basis with the sponsored students towards whom he feels a special loyalty.

We would like to send all our supporters our very best wishes and look forward to welcoming you one day in Moshi or at Shiri Mgungani.

Josiah and Richard